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SUBJECT: PASOK Official Foreshadows Foreign Policy Priorities

CLASSIFIED BY: Daniel V. Speckhard, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) PolCouns and PolOff met with PASOK International Secretary Paulina Lampsa September 10 for a wide-ranging discussion on the October 4 elections and PASOK ambitions for Greek foreign and economic policy. With PASOK currently polling ahead of Prime Minister Karamanlis' ND party, Lampsa revealed PASOK is trying to keep hot-button foreign policy issues out of the campaign and is intently focused on a strategic communications strategy. Lampsa also speculated that PASOK party leader George Papandreou might also act as Foreign Minister, should PASOK secure a parliamentary majority post-October 4. The discussion shed light on emerging PASOK foreign policy priorities, to include development assistance, maritime security and migration, as well as traditional Greek foreign policy issues related to Turkey and Cyprus.

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Papandreou as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister?  
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¶2. (C) Referencing Papandreou's time as Greece's Foreign Minister (1999-2004) Lampsa estimated that, if PASOK secures a majority in the October 4 national elections, Papandreou would either act as the Foreign Minister himself, or appoint a Foreign Minister with views close to his own that was not looking to gain more power in the party through the position. The ideal candidate would have prestige but not party ambition. Moreover, Lampsa said that Papandreou's current advisors - many of whom served under him in the MFA during his time as Foreign Minister - were encouraging him to take on the role of Foreign Minister because they did not want to shift to working for another Foreign Minister.

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Criticism of PM Karamanlis and ND  
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3.(C) When prompted to discuss how Greek foreign policy would differ should opposition party PASOK beat out PM Karamanlis' ruling ND party, Lampsa criticized Karamanlis' close relationships with the Russians and said that Greece under PASOK would be more oriented toward economic and national interests rather than making concessions to Russia and China. Lampsa specifically expressed a desire to see more balance in Greece's relationship with Russia, particularly regarding energy security. PolCouns reiterated that the United States is not opposed to Russian energy exports flowing to Greece but supports a balanced approach and one that avoids any one country monopolizing the energy market.

14. (C) PASOK would also develop more proactive foreign policies than ND, she said, rather than maintain the status quo or be reactive. Lampsas referenced PASOK party leader George Papandreou's leadership of Socialist International as a means of leveraging international influence and building international partnerships.

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US-Greek Cooperation Would Improve...From A Distance  
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15. (C) Regarding relations with the United States, Lampsas predicted that collaboration would "continue and very likely improve" under a PASOK -majority government. She noted continued support for working together on issue such as the Middle East peace process, the environment, Afghanistan and trade but also noted that PASOK needs a well-prepared communications strategy to distance Papandreou from right-wing claims that he is an American, which could pander to lingering Greek anti-Americanism and hurt Papandreou in the polls. (Note: Papandreou was in fact born in the United States and in the past has faced political and media criticism for being too "American." End Note)

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PASOK Priorities - Development, Security  
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16. (C) Lampsas also noted emerging foreign policy priorities, to include development assistance, maritime security, terrorism and migration. Regarding maritime security, Lampsas felt that Greece needing to modernize its approach and prepare for new threats. PolCouns noted that there has been an ongoing discussion regarding a code of conduct for maritime security, piracy and counterterrorism. He mentioned that the United States was signing the New York Declaration on best practices for self-protection of vessels, and encouraged Greece, a major maritime presence, to become a signatory as well.

17. (C) Lastly, Lampsas noted that PASOK foreign policy would focus more attention on counterterrorism measures and money laundering. She expressed concern that Greece - as host to large numbers of Western tourists- was vulnerable to terrorism and noted that an international terrorist attack could have a very large impact on the Greek psyche and on the tourism economy.

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Migration  
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18. (C) PolCouns raised the issue of possible linkages between terrorism and migration and inquired about the PASOK strategy for combating illegal immigration. Lampsas revealed that Papandreou is personally interested in the migration issue and that a comprehensive strategy on migration would need to entail improved cooperation with neighboring countries and better control of the movement of illegal immigrants within Greece, while still maintaining standards for fair treatment and human rights. She saw a need to distinguish between trafficking victims and illegal immigrants and noted that neither issue would be a problem if local Greeks were not aiding the process. Lampsas asserted that the government must define what immigration is needed to support the Greek economy and wants more control to outline who can come to Greece and for what purpose, through seasonal worker agreements. PolCouns recommended working directly with Turkey to address the illegal immigration flow but Lampsas felt Greece would need to improve relations with Turkey overall before this would be possible.

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Turkey and Cyprus

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¶9. (C) Although Papandreou likes to cite his work toward rapprochement with Turkey during his tenure as Foreign Minister as an indication of good relations to come, Lampsas acknowledged that, ten years later, the players in Turkey are now different. However, she feels Papandreou would have more credibility with Turkey in its pledge to support Turkish EU accession. She argued that Turkey was suspicious of the current ND government's pledge of support for Turkish EU accession, given its close relationship with the French government.

¶10. (C) Lampsas views the Cyprus issue as the most important issue in improving relations with Turkey. If the dispute between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots is resolved, it would help to resolve other Aegean issues and forge the way for better cooperation in areas such as combating illegal immigration. Acknowledging that "time is running out on Cyprus," Lampsas stressed that even if a comprehensive agreement on Cyprus cannot be forged, PASOK would support striking a partial solution and partial agreement, in order to "keep the door open."

¶11. (C) Lampsas acknowledged that Greece should focus on more global issues but also commented on how local neighborhood issues such as the Turkey, Cyprus and the Macedonia name issue need to be "gotten out of the way."

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Economy  
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¶12. (C) With debate over the economy at the forefront of the national election campaign, Lampsas argued that the Greek middle class expects a more socialized approach to the economy and that structural changes are needed in order to change legislation and the current bureaucracy impeding foreign investment and economic

growth. Addressing economic issues in Greece is also essential to maintaining credibility in Brussels and with other E.U. member states, she argued. Lampsas also expressed interest in collaborating with the United States in order to develop Greece's green economy and, in particular, hoped to see more U.S. state-to-Greek prefecture collaboration on issues such as renewable energy.

¶13. (C) Comment: While careful not to explicitly say so, Lampsas gave the impression that PASOK foreign policy moves would be "well prepared" in terms of communication and would not be a dramatic break at the start of the new government. The overall message that Greek foreign policy under PASOK would be fairly similar - at least to start - corroborates with statements that Lampsas made in meetings prior to the announcement of early elections. End Comment  
Speckhard